

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 242

By Coley

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize photographer William Eggleston for his many professional accomplishments.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to commend those estimable individuals who, through their extraordinary talents and steadfast efforts, have distinguished themselves in the arts, bringing great honor to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, legendary photographer William Eggleston is certainly one such outstanding citizen, whose pioneer spirit and innovative techniques launched modern color photography and earned him international acclaim; and

WHEREAS, at war with the obvious, Mr. Eggleston possesses the unique ability to find beauty in ordinary scenes, using common place models like a rusty tricycle, a discarded air-conditioner, or a lonely woman standing by a rural road to celebrate the mundane and give each subject renewed significance in the rich colors of his photographs; and

WHEREAS, born on July 27, 1939, in Memphis, Tennessee, William Eggleston was raised in Sumner, Mississippi by his father, an engineer and cotton farmer, and his mother, the daughter of a prominent local judge; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Eggleston was drawn to the visual arts from an early age, but it wasn't until he studied art and abstract expressionism at Vanderbilt University, Delta State College, and the University of Mississippi that his life-long love affair with photography commenced, and after a friend gave an eighteen-year-old him his first Leica camera, this young prodigy knew he had found his calling; and

WHEREAS, inspired by Walker Evan's *American Photographs* and French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment*, Mr. Eggleston worked assiduously to broaden his horizons and perfect his technique; and

WHEREAS, rejecting the prevailing notion that color photography was banal and a failure of form, Mr. Eggleston began experimenting with the disparaged method in 1965, and it soon became his dominant medium; and

WHEREAS, while serving with acumen and alacrity as a lecturer in Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, William Eggleston first discovered the dye-transfer printing process, which he would use to produce some of most his striking and celebrated works, including his 1973 deep, blood red photograph entitled "The Red Ceiling;" and

WHEREAS, in what would become known a watershed moment in the history of photography, Mr. Eggleston stunned his critics and rocked the entire industry in 1976 when New York's Museum of Modern Art decided to display his work, marking the acceptance of color photography by the highest validating institution in the world; and

WHEREAS, over the ensuing decades, William Eggleston attracted a world-wide following and earned countless glowing reviews for his numerous books and portfolios, including such notable works as *Los Alamos*, *Election Eve*, *The Morals of Vision*, *Flowers*, *Wedgwood Blue*, *Seven*, *Troubled Waters*, *The Louisiana Project*, *William Eggleston's Graceland*, *The Democratic Forest*, *Faulkner's Mississippi*, and *Ancient and Modern*; and

WHEREAS, his democratic lens has also focused on the film industry; Mr. Eggleston photographed the set of John Huston's dearly loved motion picture, *Annie*, and documented the making of the film *Easter*, as well as David Byrne's *True Stories*; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Mr. Eggleston has received a plethora of awards throughout his phenomenal career, including recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Master Photographer Award from the Photographic Society of Japan, the University of Memphis Distinguished Achievement Award, the Gold Medal for Photography from the National Arts Club in New York, the Getty Images Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Photospana Award; and

WHEREAS, his riveting life was captured in the 2005 documentary, *William Eggleston in the Real World*, and efforts are currently underway to construct a \$15 million museum in Memphis, which will house his illustrious body of work; and

WHEREAS, one of the most important contemporary visual artists of our time, William Eggleston has made an indelible impression on world of photography, captivating citizens from across the globe with his stark realism and striking displays of color, and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend William Eggleston for his extraordinary contributions to the arts, salute his iconic status as the father of modern color photography, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.